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elected in 1846 to form a state constitution. He was an early member of the State Historical Society and always interested in its progress; he wrote for the *Collections*, "History of Lead Region of Wisconsin," published in volume vi, 271-96. There is a portrait of him in the Society's museum, presented by Mrs. Meeker.

### OLDEST HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE WEST

Can you tell me which is the oldest house in the Middle West still in use? We have one here dating from 1836.

H. R. HOLAND  
*Ephraim*

We do not quite know how one would go about it to determine the oldest house now occupied in the Middle West. To begin with, one would have strictly to delimit the area included in the investigation. If you mean to include Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Missouri, and so forth, there are undoubtedly a great many houses older than 1836. For example, we chance to have in mind a house at Hillsboro, Illinois, that was built about 1825. The present home of the Quincy Historical Society was built as a residence in 1835. In a sense it might still be said to be occupied as such, for the caretaker of the society resides in the building. We mention these examples, not as particularly early ones, but merely as presenting two houses of older date than yours in Ephraim. Coming to Wisconsin, the residence of the Reverend Alfred Brunson, built at Prairie du Chien in 1836, is still in use, also the residence of Zachary Taylor while he was in command at Fort Crawford. We do not know the date of building this house, but it certainly antedates yours by at least a few years. No doubt other examples could be found here and there in the lead mine region.

### EARLY LUMBERING AND LUMBER KINGS OF WISCONSIN

I am looking desperately for authentic information regarding the early logging operations carried on in your state. I want particularly the names of the early timber "kings" and the names of the rivers that were famous for their drives.

I will greatly appreciate any effort you may make to secure this information for me.

VICTOR SHAWNE  
*Genesee, Idaho*

The information you request is too vast to be contained in a single letter; the history of the lumber industry in Wisconsin would require much research and several volumes to elucidate. However, we can furnish you with a few suggestions, taken mainly from Frederick Merk's *Economic History of Wisconsin During the Civil War Decade* (Madison, 1916).

The pinery districts that were earliest operated were those of the Wisconsin, Black, Chippewa, and St. Croix rivers in western Wisconsin; and the Wolf, Menominee, and shore lines of Green Bay in eastern Wisconsin. Upon the Wisconsin River, the longest in the state, lumbering began very early. Lieutenant Jefferson Davis, later president of the Confederacy, when stationed at Fort Winnebago took a squad of men up the river about 1830 to cut timber for the fort. Rafting began about 1839. You will find an excellent account of Wisconsin River rafting in Wis. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, 1910, 171-89. The big sawmills on the Wisconsin River were built at the several rapids where have sprung up the present cities of Grand Rapids, Stevens Point, Wausau, and Merrill. One of the earliest lumbermen on the Wisconsin was Daniel Whitney of Green Bay, an enterprising Yankee who did much to develop the resources of Wisconsin before it became a territory in 1836.

In western Wisconsin the Black River pineries were the earliest to be opened. Parties from St. Louis and Prairie du Chien went up the Black as early as 1818. The first extensive operations were by a group of Mormons who in 1841 began taking out timber for the temple at Nauvoo, Illinois. When they left, after the expulsion of the sect from Illinois, logging was begun by Jacob Spanding at Black River Falls in the early forties. The Chippewa River region was opened in the fifties by John H. Knapp and his partners, who organized the Knapp, Stout Company of Menomonie, Dunn County, Wisconsin. During the decade of the Civil War the product of the Chippewa leaped from 60,000,000 feet in 1860-61 to 436,000,000 feet in 1871-72.

In the St. Croix region the first logs were cut in the winter of 1836-37. In 1838 a company was formed to open the lumber trade of that river, which in 1843 sent two rafts of 500,000 feet

from Stillwater to St. Louis. By 1864 the rafts were towed for the first time by a steamboat.

In eastern Wisconsin methods were different. Sawmills were built on the lake and bay shore, and timber was shipped by sailing and steam craft to the great lake ports. Oshkosh was built up by the Wolf River output and became in the sixties the "Sawdust City." Its output was chiefly shipped by railroad.

Among the "lumber kings" who have been prominent in Wisconsin political history are Isaac Stephenson, Nelson Ludington, Daniel Wells, Philetus Sawyer of eastern Wisconsin; Cadwallader C. Washburn, Thaddeus Pound, J. G. Thorpe, J. H. Knapp, A. L. Stout, and Alexander Stewart of western Wisconsin. Frederick Weyerhaeuser began exploiting Chippewa pine lands in the Civil War decade. In 1871 he organized the Mississippi River Logging Company, the greatest lumber syndicate of its time.

### IDENTIFYING AN EARLY POSTSCRIPT

Can you identify a company which had a post office around 1856-57, the postmark of which reads: "G. D. D. & Min. P. Co.?" It may possibly have been in the vicinity of Pepin or North Pepin.

WM. F. GOERNER  
*Edgewood, Rhode Island*

The postmark for which you inquire was that of the Galena, Dubuque, Dunleith, and Minnesota Packet Company, which plied its steamboats on the upper Mississippi during the decade of the fifties. It was commonly spoken of as the Minnesota Packet Company. You will find an account of its history in George B. Merrick, *Old Times on the Upper Mississippi* (Arthur H. Clark Co., Cleveland, 1909). The letter was posted on the steamboat and stamped with the Packet Company's mark, as is often done with railway postal car letters.

### AGRICULTURAL FAIRS IN WISCONSIN

We are assembling information regarding the history, origin, and development of Agricultural Fairs in the United States and Europe. Could you send to me references to this general subject?

E. K. THOMAS  
*Secretary, Rhode Island Horticultural Society, Kingston, R. I.*

The first State Agricultural Fair in Wisconsin was held at Janesville in 1851; since that it has met annually except for the